



January 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Phil 1:2)

Earlier this week, Bishop Joe Vasquez shared his decision to assign priests of the Diocese of Austin to the University Catholic Center. While we respect Bishop Vasquez and his leadership of the People of God in Austin, we accept this decision with sadness as the U.C.C. has always been considered a treasured, cornerstone ministry of the Paulist Fathers.

On behalf of all the Paulists, we want to thank you for allowing us to serve as your pastors, mentors, spiritual directors, confessors, as well as be your friends in Christ for these past 112 years. We first arrived on campus in 1908. A campus ministry that began of humble origins in a small building in 1913, has grown and blossomed into this vibrant community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and neighbors. So many who have come through these doors from high schools across the Lonestar State have had their faith deepened and enlivened, and have been equipped to go forth as young adults spreading the good news as priests, religious, and lay leaders in parishes all over Texas and beyond. We will always be thankful to the Lord to have been a part of this great missionary legacy.

At this time, I want to commend Fr. Larry Rice for his service as Director of the U.C.C. the past three and half years. His vision, leadership, pastoral care, and organizational know how have elevated the ministry at the U.C.C. What a gift he is to this campus ministry! Also, I wish to commend Fr. Jimmy Hsu, your fellow longhorn, who has been particularly attentive to the pastoral needs and concerns of students and tireless in his outreach to all who come to the Center. Also, I want to lift up all those Paulists who have served at the U.C.C. over the years and those Paulists who heard the call to vocation and service while sitting right where you are today. I am so grateful for the excellence in ministry that Fr. Larry and Fr. Jimmy and so many others have provided.

If there is a silver lining, it is that the Paulists will continue to serve at St. Austin's Parish and at St. Paul the Apostle in Horseshoe Bay, Texas and that you will always be close to our hearts.

As St. Paul wrote: *"I give thanks to God at every remembrance of you, praying with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."* (Phil 1:3-6).

I plan to come to Austin soon to be with you and celebrate the great work for God we have accomplished together over these years. Until then, may the God of all consolation be with you all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Eric". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Very Rev. Eric Andrews, C.S.P.
President of the Paulist Fathers.

Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle in the State of New York

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